

REMARKS BY WILLIAM E. RINNE  
ACTING COMMISSIONER, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
PUBLIC MEETING ON MANAGING FOR EXCELLENCE  
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LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

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- I'm happy that you are here today for the first of our public meetings on the Managing for Excellence action plan. The action in getting it under way has been swift.
- I was heartened at the Senate testimony in May when one of the members of the National Academies' committee, who has been involved in other studies, said that he was impressed first, that Reclamation **responded** to their report, second, that Reclamation responded so **promptly**, and third, that Reclamation responded so **thoroughly**.
- As Mark said, Managing for Excellence is a top priority for Reclamation. And, as we develop this action plan, it is a top priority for us to hear from you; a lot of this plan concerns interaction with stakeholders, so your input is vital to the plan's success.
- Over the past several years, Reclamation leadership has been focused on determining how best to carry out our core mission as we transition from a construction organization to a water and hydropower management organization. We took a number of steps to assess our performance, including the Customer Satisfaction Survey we conducted in 2004, and Managing for Excellence is the culmination of that assessment.
- Our core mission is to deliver water, generate hydropower, and do what it takes to get that done. Managing for Excellence fits under "do what it takes to get that done." It

touches everything that we do in carrying out our mission and dealing with our stakeholders.

- We commissioned the National Academies' study because we wanted to take a hard, realistic look at ourselves to make sure we're ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century's demands.
- It's not easy to look at yourself like that, but Reclamation has a great history of adapting and innovating.
- Managing for Excellence represents a cultural change in how we at Reclamation will conduct business. The National Academies' study and our action plan look at the entire Bureau and all the work we do.
- Out of the National Academies' study, Reclamation developed the action plan consisting of 41 action items. This thing is moving quickly. All but 12 of the 41 action items are due for completion by the end of this calendar year.
- We've grouped the action items into eight broad functional areas that you will hear more about from Deputy Commissioner Larry Todd.
- There are several key things we are striving for:
  - Closer relationships with customers, with clear and transparent communication, involving customers in the decision process.
  - Transparency and understanding of the value of O&M costs.
  - Increased partnerships and technology transfers in R&D.

- Where we are now and where we are going has a lot to do with where we have come from. Reclamation has always been an energetic organization on the forefront of change.
- The challenges today are different from those we faced during the construction phase: maintenance of our aging infrastructure, the explosive population growth in the West, multiple demands for water, modernizing our business practices.
- And ensuring the succession of our human capital. At a recent meeting of Reclamation managers, Mark asked all those who were eligible for retirement in the next five years to stand ... and about three-quarters of the people in that room stood up.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> century is just as exciting a time for water management as the times of the great old construction projects. Meeting the current challenges calls for the same innovation and spirit that made Reclamation a great force in the West. And still is.
- We are moving aggressively to make Managing for Excellence a success because we believe that is the first step to playing our role as effectively as we can.
- I look forward to talking with you today.

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